

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR

ESTABLISHED IN 1840

“Let us constantly remind ourselves of our obligation to our Father in Heaven, to this Church, and to one another, that we may grow in spiritual power and usefulness in this great latter-day work.”—JOHN WELLS.

No. 9, Vol. 96

Thursday, March 1, 1934

Price One Penny

THE WORTH OF SOULS

ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

OF THE COUNCIL OF TWELVE

WE spend a great deal of time and money in gathering genealogy, and in going to the temple. Why do we do it? What does it mean to us? What is the worth of that labour to us? The first answer, no doubt, would be that God has commanded us to do such work. But, in obeying this one of God's commands, what is its particular worth to us? I open the Gospel door to one who has passed beyond, many, many years, and make it possible for him, if he so desires, to achieve the blessings that I desire for myself. What does that service mean to me? Suppose I did not do it, would I be any different? Suppose I let someone else do it, would it really affect me in any way? That is the question for our discussion in the paragraphs that follow.

A soul, in the light of this discussion, is an eternal being, one that has no beginning and no end, so far as we can reckon time; a being, further, that has the distinguishing attribute of being capable of eternal progress. A soul is, then, an eternal being capable of unending progress. That definition comprehends the whole philosophy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The ultimate value of a soul must be tremendous if a soul is an eternal being capable of everlasting, unending progress. Such a soul may rise to any height within the comprehension of man. There is no place, however remote, in the great advancing programme, which may not be reached by a being which has the capacity and power of eternal progress. The ultimate value of a soul must be the sum of all that has been, that is, and that may be, for in such a soul lies the possibility of the past, the present, and the future. Everything must be within the reach of a being which is capable of eternal progress. Whether every soul can attain that ultimate and final value is an open question, but every soul may constantly and forever approach the high ideal of perfection, or perfected achievement.

However, we are not considering the ultimate value of a soul, we are discussing the particular worth of a soul to me, a genealogical worker. What is the worth to me of a soul for whom I have helped to open "the gates of salvation" through my gathering of genealogical data, or through my temple work?



ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

Man is here as a purposeful being. In the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ chance is ruled out. We live for a purpose on a purposeful earth. We live a purposeful existence and have a purposeful destiny. Things may appear to us as if they are born of chance; but if we could unravel them, if we could see the picture completely, if we could begin at the beginning and carry on to the end, we should see that in life, whether past, present or future, there is no chance. Earth and man come under one great pervading purpose, to which we must all bow and give our allegiance, whether in this life or in the life to come.

God had a purpose in placing us upon earth. We are eternal souls, with the inherent power to progress, placed on earth for the purpose of learning better how to go forward under the law

of progression, stepping on from one estate to another estate, preparing ourselves for still another estate, all in the line of advancement. The result of such progression, the final purpose of life, has been clearly and definitely stated by the Prophet Lehi: "Men are, that they might have joy."

God's intent is to surround His children upon earth with the possibilities of joy. And joy can be won in only one way—the joy of which the prophet Lehi speaks, through the definite principle of eternal progress. There can be no joy for a person who stands still; to him, that which seems joy is merely a make-belief, the shell, not the kernel. It is but the savory smell, not the feast itself.

The purpose of life on earth is that man might progress. The plan of salvation provides that every man shall have the opportunity for eternal progress, or advancement. The door must not be shut upon any persons. All humanity must have opportunities for salvation. Salvation must be universal. There is no end to God's mercy. There is no end to God's hope for His children. There is no end to His determination to bring us under the law, to achieve the sublime purpose stated by father Lehi. "Men are, that they might have joy"—the joy which accompanies progress, advancement and constantly increasing attainment.

In the universe of living, intelligent beings, there are many gradations. Some are perfected—we call them gods. God, the Father of all, is beyond our full comprehension in His attributes.

No man can comprehend infinity. There are other living beings, here and elsewhere, of lesser and varying intelligence and achievements, all moving forward, upward, to the high destiny of all sentient beings.

It is self-evident that those who are lower down in the scale of progression do not know as much as those who are superior in experience, and therefore need help from those further advanced. We need ask and receive help from our Heavenly Father. Every man has need of the guidance that comes from a greater intelligence. Therefore we have a plan of salvation.

While man has need of help from above, he also has a wondrous power within himself. The Lord may offer the best help, as indeed He has, for man's advancement, joy and progress, but man himself must exercise the power within him to accept or to reject that which is offered him. The Lord does not save men without some effort on their part.

The Lord provides the plan of salvation; He holds out His hands and points the way; but man must do his part; he must accept or reject, use or neglect the offerings. In a certain large way we may say that man saves himself by acceptance of truth and by obedience to that which God requires of him.

In our pre-existent state, in the day of the great council, held before the foundation of the earth was laid, we made a certain agreement with the Almighty. The Lord proposed a plan, conceived by Him. We accepted it. Since the plan is intended for all men, we became parties to the salvation of every person under that plan. We agreed, right then and there, to be not only saviours for ourselves, but measurably, saviours for the whole human family. We went into a partnership with the Lord. The working out of the plan became then not merely the Father's work, and the Saviour's work, but also our work. The least of us, the humblest, is in partnership with the Almighty in achieving the purpose of the eternal plan of salvation.

That places a very responsible attitude towards the human race. By that doctrine, with the Lord at the head, we become saviours on Mount Zion, all committed to the great plan of offering salvation to the untold numbers of spirits. To do this is the Lord's self-imposed duty, this great labour His highest

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I HAVE spent my life in endeavouring to save souls, chiefly the souls of young people. As a school teacher, that has been my responsibility. My own children were nearly all taken from me, and that made it important that I devote myself to the children of other people. I have had many experiences in life, having been in public service all my life since I was a lad. And I want to tell you, as my individual testimony, that I know no sweeter joy, I know of nothing that has given me more assistance of spirit, more courage to go on in life, than to try to make use of my fellow men in saving my own soul, by helping them save theirs. It is the sweetest work one can be engaged in. . . . I have had so many experiences, both in and out of the temple, in seeking the names of my own dead, in gathering books for the genealogical library, that I know that the powers of heaven follow the person who unselfishly gives himself to this work, as perhaps no other class of workers within the Church.—JOHN A. WIDTSOE.

glory. Likewise, it is man's duty, self-imposed, his pleasure and joy, his labour, and ultimately his glory.

There is no place for forgetting the other man in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There stands my brother. It was for him that the whole plan was made, for him the Church was organized, for him all these blessings were given—not for me alone. Oh, I stand there too. The Church was made for me, the Gospel was given for me, all the blessings were given for me; but my brother is entitled to them just as much as I am. He and I together and all of us must unitedly work together to fulfill the great purposes of the Almighty Father.

UNDER the Gospel what is man's highest ideal? Under the Gospel it must be to become like the Father. If the Lord's concern is chiefly to bring happiness and joy, salvation to the whole human family, we cannot become like the Father unless we too engage in that work. There is no chance for the narrow, selfish, introspective man in the kingdom of God. He may survive in the world of men; he may win fame, fortune and power before men, but he will not stand high before the Lord unless he learns to do the works of God, which always point toward the salvation of the whole human family.

What is the foundation of God's work, according to the principles which we have here discussed? Why did God provide a plan for the salvation of the whole human family? Why did He not choose for high advancement a few, the kindest, the most forward-looking, the most obedient of His children?

Every Latter-day Saint can answer. Because God possesses the principle of love—the most wonderful, the most magnificent, the most sublime, the most tremendous in power of all principles known to man—which lies at the very foundation of God's work in behalf of the human family. He prepared His plan, devised it out of His divine intelligence, laid it before His children, because of the love He had and has for His children. Love is born out of sacrifice, that is why there was a great battle in the heavens between Lucifer and the Father's representative. There can be no real love, living, active, useful love, love that has market value in the heavens above, unless that love is born and nurtured by sacrifice. Has the Lord sacrificed for us? I need not answer that question. Did the Saviour sacrifice for us? That needs no answer. Would a cold, lifeless God, out in distant space, planning a great mathematical plan, and doing nothing else—would He, could He display real love? But a Father, with a father's love, would give of Himself for His children. The Firstborn of our heavenly family proved His love by a sacrifice that no other living being upon the face of the earth can approach. The foundation of this work is love, born and nurtured and developed in sacrifice. The worth of a soul now becomes great to me. I go into the temple, and give a half day to opening the doors of salvation for a dead person; or I spend many precious hours searching for, planning, gathering genealogy in order that he and his brothers—my brothers—may have those saving ordinances done for them by my fellow-workers who have access to the Temples of the Lord. I only know him by name, and never shall know him nearer on this earth; but out of my own understanding love of the cause, no matter how humble it may be,

and out of my willingness to sacrifice to prove that love, I take a step toward the likeness of my Father in heaven. It is a tremendous thing—this soul for whom I labour. Without that soul I might not find the same opportunity of approaching the likeness of my Father. That soul is of immense worth to me.

“Remember,” says the Lord, “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh : wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.”

All have to face death. Many men have been crucified to death. But only one has been crucified who suffered the death of the whole race in his own death, who felt the weight of all the sins of all men, because He had to redeem humanity through His death. A precious gift was Christ's life, given that we might win salvation.

The worth of souls, from Christ's service, must be very, very great. He undertook the leadership of the plan, with all of its difficulties and terrors, and we, if we desire to approach the Christlike life, must be willing to do, in our small, humble way, for our brethren and sisters, living and dead, just what He did for us. The privilege of sacrificing for our brethren, living and dead, makes the worth of souls seem very great.

THE Lord said to Moses : “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and the eternal life of man.” A soul must be tremendously valuable in the sight of the Father, if His work and His glory consist in bringing salvation to souls. Again I say to you, out of the feelings of my heart, that never will the love of God grow cold toward His children. If we open the doors, if we do the earth work for those who have gone before, then I believe that through the eternities to come, the Lord will continue to wrestle with His wayward, disobedient, unwilling children, until He brings back all who will come. The Prophet Joseph Smith, sweeping eternity with his prophetic vision said, “There is never a time when the spirit is too old to approach God. All are within the reach of pardoning mercy who have not committed the unpardonable sin.”

“This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” To realize our highest ideal, then, to be like our Father, we must do as He has done. Our work must be to bring to pass the happiness of mankind, and our glory will be won thereby. To imitate Christ, to win the blessings that follow love and sacrifice, we must render service to our fellow men, living and dead. A soul becomes of indescribable value, since it offers a means of service by which we ourselves may rise to the position and power of godhood.

How shall I realize this high ideal? It may be done in part by serving the dead, though not forgetting the living—I would not place the dead in advance of the living except as the dead are very helpless in these earth ordinances. A few years ago, I went to Europe with rather a handful of names of my ancestors. But I wanted joy and glory of further service. I wanted to be a little more like my Father. So I began to look around for more genealogical information. It cost money and time. The Lord blessed me, gave me a great many more than I thought I could possibly gather, thousands of them. If I had only found

a few, the fact that I did all I could entitled me to the joy of one who tries to help onward the cause of the Lord. If I had found none, I might yet have won joy by doing service for someone not of my blood. Since a soul is so valuable for me to accomplish my own high destiny, it does not matter so much, when I run out of names that belong to my own family, whose names I take. My first obligation is to my own, but my ultimate obligation is to the human race. If every person will take care of his own family, of course, in time the whole human race will be looked after.

In our work of gathering genealogy, doing our temple work, sealing the dead who have been endowed, that is, finishing the work as far as we can here upon this earth by opening the doors of salvation for those who have gone before—we realize measurably the high ideal which should rest in the bosom of every Latter-day Saint.

The worth of a soul can best be measured in its effect upon man's realization of his highest ideal. Without my brother I cannot attain my highest. Without loving him I cannot look forward to the highest place. Without sacrificing for him I cannot hope to win the fullest recognition. Without him I cannot achieve my likeness to the Lord. We are bound together, one great human family, moving on to a glorious destiny.—(Adapted from a synopsis of a Genealogical Class exercise, appearing in the *Deseret News*, January 20th, 1931.)

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCES OF "MORMONISM"

THE URIM AND THUMMIM

IN His work of aiding man in eternal progression, God has dealt with him since the beginning of human history. He uses every good means to meet the various conditions; thus in the Bible, stories, allegories, similies, proverbs, parables, poetry and prose are utilized to give God's message. So also in communicating with His children He has adopted various means. Sometimes He appears directly, personally, sometimes He speaks to His people with His voice, at times He sends messengers. Dreams and visions may be used to impart information or instruction. Often such instruction comes through the impressing of an idea upon the mind by the Holy Spirit. At various times, for certain purposes, God has aided His servants in still another way—by means of a sacred instrument, the Urim and Thummim.

The Urim and Thummim was understood and used by the Israelites, though there has been but a meagre description of it handed down to us. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia* it consists of "Objects connected with the breastplate of the high priest, and used as a kind of divine oracle." The words themselves are supposed to mean "lights and perfections." Aaron carried the Urim and Thummim whenever he appeared before the Lord in behalf of His people. (Exodus 28: 30; Lev. 8: 8.) From the blessing Moses pronounced upon Levi (Deut. 33: 8-11) it is evident that it was a part of the equipment of one whose special office it was to teach the people "the judgments" and "the law." In the

days when Saul was king of Israel the Urim and Thummim was still in existence. Sammel had, evidently, received revelations from the Lord by means of it, but after the death of that prophet the Lord refused to answer the questions of the king. (1 Sammel 28: 3-6.) The newer translations of the Bible render 1 Sammel 14: 41 as: "O Lord, God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If the guilt be in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim; but if it is in thy people Israel, give Thummim." (Smith and Goodspeed translation.) This shows that the servants of the Lord anciently inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim.

THOUGH certain Israelitish people had lost their genealogical records, after the return from captivity, they were to be allowed to keep their stand among the people, "till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim," who could declare the will of the Lord concerning them. (Ezra 2: 59-63; Nehemiah 7: 65.) Post-exilic Israel, so far as history records, had neither the sacred Urim and Thummim, nor the sacred breastplate to which it was attached. According to Kitto, *Encyclopedia Biblical Literature*, the breastplate of the high priest was "a splendid ornament covering the breast of the high priest. It was composed of richly embroidered cloth, in which were set, in four rows, twelve precious stones, on each of which was engraven the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel."

In the Book of Mormon the Urim and Thummim is called the "interpreters." The Lord gave these two stones to the brother of Jared and commanded him to seal them up with his writings. (Ether 3: 21-28.) Mosiah had such an instrument which he used to translate the Jaredite record (Omni 20; Mosiah 8:13, 19), and which he handed down to Alma (Mosiah 28: 20.) Alma gave them to Helaman (Alma 37: 20-25), and finally Moroni sealed them up with his writings. (Ether 4: 5.) From Doctrine and Covenants 17: 1, we learn that the Urim and Thummim which came into the possession of the Prophet Joseph Smith was the very instrument which God had given to the brother of Jared upon the mount. It was through this instrument that the Prophet Joseph was enabled to translate the characters of the Book of Mormon plates. The Prophet gave the following description of it:

With the records was found a curious instrument, which the ancients called "Urim and Thummim," which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to the breastplate. Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God. (*History of the Church*, 4: 537.)

It is interesting to note that though many centuries have elapsed since Moroni buried the "interpreters" with the Book of Mormon records, following the apostacy and destruction of the Nephite civilization, yet there are evidences in native American beliefs and religions practices which seem to point to a knowledge of the "interpreters," or Urim and Thummim. The use of small stones, transparent or otherwise, usually highly polished, as instruments to help in trying to get information from the Unseen World is to be found among several peoples. The Huile-che treasure seekers in South America look earnestly for the object of

(Continued on page 139)

THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 1934

EDITORIAL

THESE TROUBLOUS TIMES

FOR many reasons all Latter-day Saints are very much interested in current events, especially those having a national or international import. We are living in the "last days," the signs given by Jesus and His inspired prophets all pointing to these times as the period when Christ's Second Coming is near at hand. Of the day and hour of His coming, however, no man knoweth, not even the angels in heaven. But can anyone reverently read the 24th chapter of Matthew, having in mind also current conditions, without feeling that the time is nearly ripe for the appearance of the "sign of the Son of man in heaven?" All the conditions named in this chapter appear to exist among the children of men. Trouble and confusion seem to exist among all people in every nation.

The talk of war is almost universal. The people do not want war, they dread it. They know the frightful destruction and the terrible horrors that would follow in its wake. They believe our civilization is at stake. It would hardly survive another great war, so complete would be the ravages of the conflict. And yet the nations appear to be hastily preparing for war. It is even said that never in modern times were the nations so fully and heavily armed as now. Certainly the means of destruction were never before so devastating and powerful. Not only armies and fighting men would be subject to attack, but the civilian population as well. Death would rain down piteously from the skies, and no defense could prevent it. Every city and town would be subject to the attack which would be so quick and speedy that in a few hours a whole city could be destroyed.

No, the people do not want war. And it appears that the rulers of the nations do not want war. Apparently, most of them are earnestly seeking ways and means to avoid war and insure a lasting peace. However, armament and re-armament go forward apace, the theory being (no doubt a fallacious one) that the best way to insure peace is to be prepared for war. (If there were no magazine would a match cause an explosion? If no nation were armed would there be war?)

There is also everywhere a prevalent and developing nationalistic spirit. Yet every nation professedly desires to have friendly relations, commercial and otherwise, with every other nation. Yet most of the nations at least are busy erecting

barriers to trade and intercourse with each other, devising schemes of retaliation for real or fancied "discrimination." International amity seems to be pushed further into the background by pronounced nationalism.

And so, the people want and cry for peace but there is no peace. Internally there is distress and turmoil in every nation. There is an abundance to supply every physical need, yet myriads of people are in want. Externally each nation calls for peace, equality, and security, but at the same time makes additions to its armaments. Deadlocks exist in the efforts at international agreements, and so the talk of war is daily becoming louder and more general. The whole situation is critical and certainly very complex.

But why is it so? Could it be thus if there were a general recognition of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man? If the Golden Rule were actually dominant in the affairs of men—locally, nationally, and internationally? If all men really accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer and lived according to His teachings, would there be any difficulty in securing disarmament among the nations of the earth? We may want peace and the abolition of war; we may work and pray for these conditions, but we are likely to have them only when there is a general repentance and men turn from their selfish and sinful ways. Pride, envy, selfishness, and a lust for power are among the effective tools of Satan that must be abolished before the proclamation of "peace on earth to men of good will" can eliminate wars and the rumours of wars. In the meantime all saints will continue to lend their support to every agency and movement the objectives of which are friendships, peace, and righteousness.—M.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

AS Latter-day Saints, our work has been clearly assigned to us from the heavens. We are to carry the Gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. And, if we would gain greater glory and lay up choice treasures in heaven, that our joy may be complete, we have even greater responsibilities. We must extend the opportunity to enjoy the Gospel privileges to our loved ones who have passed on without a knowledge of Gospel truths.

For many years this task has appeared to be insurmountable to us in the Missions of Zion. Exact information about our ancestors had to be gleaned out of the past, and properly recorded on legal Temple Sheets. Knowledge as how to carry on this research was lacking, and our efforts seemed almost futile. Even those who were successful in gathering genealogical data found still another barrier confronting them. The temples were

so far away, and there was no definite way to have the necessary work performed.

But now, all of these barriers save one—hard, patient work—have been removed. The genealogical societies provide ample training and assistance to those who wish to search out their dead, and the way has been opened for the work to be done for us who gather genealogy here in Britain. Last year more than 7,000 baptisms and endowments were performed voluntarily for as many names sent in by European Saints. This year, Cache Stake in Logan, Utah, has extended a second offer—to perform the temple work for 10,000 more names from the records of the faithful saints in Europe! And in making this offer, they express the joy that it gives them to help us here in the Missions of Zion.

The way is opened; all that remains for us to do is our part. Others have gained joy in helping us. Let us taste that same sweet joy of service by extending these Gospel blessings to still others who have passed on, and are dependent upon us; for by showing others the way, and by doing what we can toward giving them an opportunity to accept the Gospel of Christ, we shall win their love, and with them, have great joy in heaven.—
JOHN D. RIGGS, Genealogical Supervisor of the British Mission.

A BUILDING FUND COMPETITION

THAT ideas have definite value has been a long-conceded point. Recognized, too, is the fact that ideas put to work have even more value than ideas that lie idle. But it has remained to the planners of the new M. I. A. Building Fund Competition to establish the relative relationship in value existing between such ideas and their accomplishment. The Competition Committee has put a cash value on each. And best of all, the beneficiaries of this now-settled controversy will be the active, wide-awake branches of the British Mission.

Dr. Ray M. Russell, of the British Mission M. I. A. Board, has offered prizes totaling ten pounds to be awarded to the branch M. I. A. organizations that show the most originality and initiative in getting and putting into effect ideas to increase the balance of the building funds in their various branches. The competition is divided into two periods, A and B. Period A contest begins at once, and will continue until midnight of May 31, 1934. During this time branch M. I. A. members will get their heads together and plan ways and means of increasing their building funds. For the best group of ten ideas submitted will be awarded the sum of two pounds. The best single idea—it must be novel, unique, and workable—will be worth one pound.

After the turn of mid-night on May 31st, the race will take a different and more interesting course. Everyone's ideas will be everyone else's, and it will be period B: "putting ideas to work."

From then until midnight of December 31st, branches will test the worth of their ideas and plans. To the branch raising the largest sum of building fund money before midnight of December 31st—all money that finds its way into the building funds from February 10th until the deadline will count—will go the first prize of five pounds. The branch coming second in the rush to fill its coffers will receive two pounds. Other branches who are not fortunate enough to win the coveted prizes, but who nevertheless have worked conscientiously, will all of a sudden discover that, in the meantime, their building funds have doubled or trebled, anyway. And everyone will be happy.

Rules and regulations for this unique contest are now in the hands of each branch M. I. A. presidency. The contest has none of the uncertainties of an Irish Sweepstake. Governing the prizes of the M. I. A. Building Fund Competition will be the unchangeable law of Cause and Effect. The awards await the branches who work swiftly, surely, conscientiously and wisely to win them.

Dr. Ray M. Russell has shown his faith in the ability and power of the British Mission Youth to realize that which collectively they most desire—better places in which to carry on Church activities. He and the committee have placed substantial cash values on good ideas and their accomplishment. The competition is on! Does your branch realize it?—R. S. B.

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCES OF "MORMONISM"

(Concluded from page 135)

their search in a smooth black stone. A crystal was used among the Iroquois, in North America, to attempt to find the identity of one person supposed to be bewitching another.* "The Cherokee magicians by means of their *volunsade* or crystals, obtained power to go to the spirit world and back. In them they beheld events anywhere and anytime they wished. . . . The Zuni priests used crystals for like purposes."† It is reported that "amongst the Mayas the *h'menes* or priests were enabled by gazing into the *Zazun*, a crystal of quartz or other translucent material, to behold reflected therein the past, present and future, to locate lost articles, to see what was happening to absent ones, to learn by whose witchery sickness and disaster had been caused. Scarcely a village in Yucatan was without one of these stones. (Brinton, *Essays of an Americanist*, p. 165.)"†

Lewis Spence, who has spent thirty-five years in research on Central America, says:

We can glean much regarding the magical propensities of the Maya priesthood from a study of the customs of the related Zapotec priests of southern Mexico, whose religion was of Maya origin. Their high priests

*N. W. Thomas, *Crystal Gazing*, p. 44.

†Stanbury Hagar, in Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* 1: 434; see also Bancroft, *Native Races*, 2: 697.

were known as Uija-tao, or "great seer," and their chief function was evidently to consult the gods in important matters relating either to the community or to individuals. . . . They employed stones for visionary purposes. (*Magie and Mysteries of Mexico*, pp. 227-28.)

A small crystal was found in an urn in Chichen Itza (in Yucatan) by Dr. Augustus le Plongeon. Speaking of the crystal his wife said: "It may be regarded that he whose remains were there preserved had been a seer and a prophet."*

These concepts remind one forcibly of Ammuon's explanation of the power of the seer (Mosiah 8:16-18):

A seer is a revelator and a prophet also: and a gift which is greater can no man have, except that he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God. But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known. Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings.

It is even reported that "In Peru one of the Incas is said to have discovered crystal gazing."† Could this be a tradition referring to Mosiah?

AT the village of Tecpan, Guatemala, "the judges heard and decided the causes brought before them and their sentences were executed on the spot. Previous to executing them, however, it was necessary to have them confirmed by the oracle for which three of the judges left their seats and proceeded to a deep ravine, where there was a place of worship containing a dark transparent stone, on the surface of which Deity was supposed to indicate the fate of the criminal."‡ Does not this remind one of the somewhat similar use of the Urim and Thummim in Israel?

Breastplates also were of importance, indeed Rivero and Tschudi, in their *Peruvian Antiquities* (1853, p. 10) give us this striking statement: "The American priests scrupulously guarded their sanctuary, and the High Priest carries on his breast a white shell adorned with precious stones which recalls the Urim of the Jewish High Priest." Gold breastplates were worn as a mark of distinction and office by Incas, priests, and their gods were adorned with them on their monuments. M. H. Saville, American scholar, relates of gold breastplates: "Golden breastplates in the form of discs have been found in various parts of ancient America, notably Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Some are plain discs, while others are embossed with figures, or, as in the case of some specimens from Colombia, bear in high relief the representation of two breasts. Curiously they are not so common in Peru as in the northwestern part of South America. . . . Markham, in his *Incas of Peru*, 1910, says: 'Gold plates 5.3 inches in diameter, representing the

**London Magazine*, 1910, p. 129.

†N. W. Thomas, *Crystal Gazing*, p. 45.

‡Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 4: 782.

sun, with a border apparently designed to denote the months by special signs were worn on the breast of the Incas and the great councillors."**

In a stone grave in Tepic, two skeletons were found "around whose necks were altogether 26 small bells of solid gold, besides some turquoise. On the breast of one of the dead was a large plate of solid hammered gold, which had been used as an ornament."†

Saville tells further in recording his researches :

Discs were called *tocuillacomalli* by the Aztecs, and were used as breast ornaments by the caciques (kings) and often placed on the chests of idols, the central piece of a necklace of jadeite beads. Many such are represented in the codices (ancient picture writings), and it was the decoration par excellence of Tezcatlipoca, "the shining moon." In the Codex Ramirez this deity is represented with the breast covered by a circular plate of gold.

As at the time of Christ, the apostate Scribes and Pharisees were following the outward forms of a religion whose power had been lost, so also, the apostate descendants of the Book of Mormon peoples, in their degenerate use of "seer" stones, and the wearing of breastplates—though mixed with error and superstition, give evidence of the possession of the Urim and Thummim, and a knowledge of the sacred breastplates by their ancestors.

The use of the Urim and Thummim in ancient Israel, and in Book of Mormon times, confirmed by evidences given above, give added reasonableness and consistency of the use, in the translation of the Book of Mormon, of a sacred instrument, as a means through which God may work. "Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God." It is another confirmatory evidence of "Mormonism"!—FRANKLIN S. HARRIS, JR.

NORWICH DISTRICT CONFERENCE

THE Norwich District Spring Conference was held at Norwich, February 11th, a culmination of several weeks of intensive effort to make the people of the District "Mormon"-conscious. Mission Authorities present were European Mission President Joseph F. Merrill and Sister Emily T. Merrill, and British Mission President James H. Douglas and Sister Rintha Pratt Douglas. The day's three sessions were well attended.

The morning session was devoted to auxiliary and divisional work, under the direction of President and Sister Douglas. First speaker in the afternoon session, after the customary items of the district business had been presented, was Sister Merrill. She spoke of the frailty of human nature, and the degree to which one is prone to be satisfied with half-measures; concluding with a prayer that each member would survey his own attitude, and rectify it, if necessary, to cure the malady of "not doing," and thus bring about the accomplishment of our aims. Sister Annie

* *A Golden Breastplate from Cuzco, Peru*, Heye Foundation, New York, 1921.

† Saville, *Goldsmith's Art in Ancient Mexico*, pp. 180-81, 183; see also p. 183; *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 20, 1933.

Ayden, a member of the local Relief Society, told of the Society's purpose and projects, and sketched its past accomplishments.

President Merrill, in his remarks, presented the stand taken by "Mormonism" with reference to its acceptance or rejection by the world. Explaining how inseparably the divinity of the Church is related to the divinity of the Book of Mormon, he gave evidence of the support that modern research is giving to its authenticity. And salvation, he said, is an individual affair; as no man can be saved in ignorance, and can be attained only through constant striving to progress physically and spiritually.

In the evening session, District President Vern R. Butcher explained the need of continual revelation in the salvation of man, and how necessary to every individual was the correct comprehension of God.

Sister Douglas discussed the basis for the prejudice that exists against the Church, and the sources of mis-information. She closed with an expression of her gratitude to the sisters for their co-operation, and an admonition for those in doubt of the truth to seek it, and when they find it to embrace it.

President Douglas told of the tremendous changes which have taken place during the past century, and of the progress that has been made in civilization, and inquired as to the possible change in religious thinking during that period. He laid stress upon the digression made by the people of the world from the original principles of Christ's Church, and made a sincere entreaty for those unfamiliar with our doctrines to investigate them thoroughly.

Musical selections during the afternoon and evening sessions were given by Sister Mildred Jennis, Brother John Cook and Brother Albert A. Cole. District elders in attendance were President Vern R. Butcher, Woodrow C. Williams, John B. Stagg, J. Kay Lindsay, and George E. Astle.

J. KAY LINDSAY, Clerk of Conference.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Release: Elder Vern R. Butcher of the Welsh, Newcastle and Norwich Districts, the latter over which he presided, was honourably released from his missionary duties on February 26th. With Elder John E. Owens he will leave for his home in America, sailing March 15th aboard the s.s. *Manhattan* from Southampton.

Appointment: Elder John B. Stagg was appointed on February 26th to preside over the Norwich District.

Transfer: Elder Albert G. Hunt was transferred on February 20th, from the Portsmouth District to the Birmingham District.

Doings in the Districts: *Birming-*

ham—Handsworth Branch Sunday School and Primary held their annual joint childrens' social and tea in the Branch Chapel on February 10th. The childrens' party was followed by a "grown-ups" social in the evening. Both were attended by non-members, as well as by saints, affording a splendid proselyting opportunity. Sister Winifred Makin directed the afternoon's activities. Brother and Sister J. H. Makin arranged the evening's programme.

London—Holloway Branch held its first Primary conference at the Branch Hall, Sunday, February 18th. The programme was under the direction of Primary President Alice Willmott. Youngsters Stanley J. Lewis, Doris Watts, Derek Hawks and Joseph Willmott ex-

plained to a large congregation the work of their particular Primary departments. Musical numbers were furnished by a Primary children's chorus.

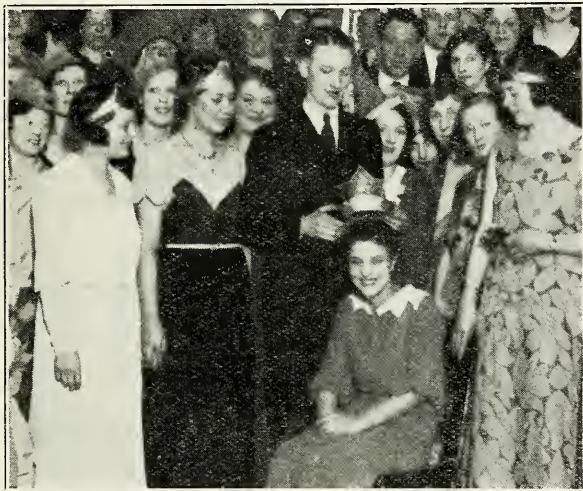
Nottingham—Queens were the feature of the Nottingham Gold and Green Ball held in Nottingham, February 10th. At the commencement of the evening's activities, queens from each branch were introduced to the dancers. During the early evening smiling, vivacious Winifred Robinson, of Nottingham, was selected by ballot to be Dis-

ceded the dancing. Special numbers included a skit by Mr. Jimmy German, a local comedian, who was assisted by his wife, and Sister Mildred Hilton. The branch hall was tastefully decorated for the occasion. Sister May Slater, Y.L.M.I.A. president was in charge of the programme and general arrangements.

Bristol—Members of the Cirencester and Cheltenham Branches united to stage their Gold and Green Ball at the Cirencester Hall, Wednesday, February 14th. The hall was attractively decorated for

for the event. Gold and Green paper streamers hung from the ceiling, and the walls were festooned with ivy. Variety was provided during the evening of dancing by community singing, games and entertaining numbers from friends and members.

Refreshments were served by the members of the M.I.A. under the direction of Sister Alice Mullis, Cirencester Y.L.M.I.A. president. A feature of the evening was the presentation to each per-



NOTTINGHAM QUEEN CROWNED
(Courtesy, *Nottingham Journal*)

son of a green and gold rosette to commemorate the event. Queens of the evening, conceded by popular vote to be most representative of the spirit of M. I. A. work, were Sisters Nora Newman and Frances Pool. Music was furnished by Sister Jean Mullis, Mr. Leslie May and Master Basil Godsen. Sister May Junner directed the planning of the evening's activities.

trict Queen, and surrounded by her courtly rivals, at intermission time, was crowned by President Heber I. Boden.

The Nottingham Co-operative Hall was attractively decorated, in carnival style, for the affair. Gold and green carnival hats, and carnival novelties added a festive touch. One hundred and fifty dancers pronounced the evening a pleasant success.

Liverpool—Nelson Branch played host to members and friends of the northern section of the district at a delightful Green and Gold Ball on February 17th. A programme of readings, skits and music pre-

Newcastle—At a baptismal service held in Sunderland Chapel on February 7th, Ernest Foster was baptized by Elder Alma H. Boyce. He was confirmed immediately after the services,

MY PRAYER

I THANK Thee, Father, for Thy light—
 The glorions Gospel plan,
 That Thou hast placed within our reach,
 The joy for every man.
 O Father—good and merciful,
 Wilt Thou Thine ear incline,
 And listen to my prayer sincere,
 Give me Thine aid Divine.

My fathers whom Thou gavest me,
 The names I do not know :
 O lead me Father by Thy light,
 Their records to me show.
 If this work holds in its embrace,
 The priceless trnth of them,
 Do Thou, O Father, lend Thy light,
 To write their names again.

If to this world their names are lost,
 No records here to see,
 Thy help I ask, O Father, give
 Thy records unto me.
 That I may do for them the work
 Thou gavest me to do,
 Rejoicing in Thy wondrous plan,
 Redemption for them, too.

I love them for their sacrifice,
 Who to me life did'st give,
 Now for them all, their work I do,
 That we, with Thee might live.
 I know Thy law must be obeyed,
 With Thee to live again.
 I ask, believing in Thy word,
 In Jesus' name, Amen!

DAVID R. ROBERTS, Ogden, Utah.

DEATH

SMITH—Sister Florence Emma the direction of the Priesthood, but
 Smith, daughter of John Teasdale the grave was dedicated January
 Whitfield, died January 21st. 28th, by Elder Conway Ashton.
 Funeral services were not under

CONTENTS

The Worth of Souls	...	...	129	A Building Fund Com-		
Confirmatory Evidences	of			petition	...	138
"Mormonism"	...	...	134	Norwich District Conference	...	141
Editorials :				From the Mission Field...	...	142
These Tronblons Times	...	...	136	Poetry :		
A Golden Opportunity	...	...	137	My Prayer	...	144

PUBLISHER : JAMES H. DOUGLAS, 43 TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON, W.C. 1

EDITOR : JOSEPH F. MERRILL, 5 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C. 1

ASSOCIATE EDITOR : RICHARD S. BENNETT, 5 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C. 1

JAMES FOGGO, PRINTER, 27 PARK LANE, LIVERPOOL